

For Your Benefit

State of Michigan Retirees

Volume 3 2006

Parents and grandparents: Share this article with your little ones — and maybe the not-so little ones, too. Then, to make sure they remember the safety ideas and have a little fun, let them complete the word search game in the center of this newsletter.

Stop germs where you are

Your little one comes home with the sniffles. A coworker sounds like he's coughing up a lung. On the crowded bus ride home, someone sneezed on you. Everywhere you turn, you're facing germs — those yucky microbes that give you colds or the flu. But there are steps you can take to shield yourself and your family from these sneaky sources of sickness.

Catching a cold or flu

The germs that cause colds and flu are spread from person to person in respiratory droplets that come from someone's cough or sneeze. Even though you may not see the droplets, they're there, expelled from the mucus that's formed when someone is infected. The droplets move through the air and are deposited on the mouths or noses of people nearby. Germs also spread when you touch another person's droplets on a surface such as a desk and then touch your own eyes, mouth or nose before washing your hands. Germs are resilient. Some viruses and bacteria can live two hours or longer on surfaces like cafeteria tables, doorknobs and desks.

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Stop germs where you are continued from page 1

Stopping the spread of germs

There are simple ways to stop the spread of germs:

- **Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.** Cough or sneeze into a tissue and then throw it away. Cover your cough or sneeze if you don't have a tissue. Then clean your hands — and do so every time you cough or sneeze.
- **Clean your hands often.** Wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds. That's about the same time it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice.
When soap and water aren't available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used. You can find them in most supermarkets and drugstores. If you're using the gel, rub your hands until the gel is dry. The gel doesn't need water to work; the alcohol in it kills the germs on your hands.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.** Germs spread when people touch something that is contaminated with germs and then touch their eyes, noses or mouths.
- **Stay home. Get plenty of rest when you are sick.** Check with a health care provider when needed. Think

of it as doing your classmates or coworkers a favor. Keeping your distance from others may protect them from getting sick.

The common cold is an infection of the upper respiratory tract caused by some 200 different viruses. It's the most common illness responsible for lost time at work and school. The average child will get five to seven colds each year and the average adult will get one to two colds each year. Cold symptoms last 3 to 10 days.

The flu causes high rates of absenteeism among students and staff in U.S. schools. Influenza isn't the only respiratory infection of concern in schools — nearly 22 million school days are lost each year to the common cold alone. However, when children practice healthy habits, they miss fewer days of school.

Do as I say, not as I do

Kids should do a better job of washing their hands than their parents and other adults. Here are some statistics you may want to consider the next time you shake someone's hand:

WASH HANDS	HOW MANY DO ¹
After using public and home restrooms	83%
After petting dog or cat	42%
When sneezing or coughing	32%
After handling money	21%
Men	58%
Women	75%

¹American Society for Microbiology

Take the Flu Quiz

Test your flu vaccine savvy with these true or false questions, then check your answers below.

True or False?

- Q1: People can die from the flu.**
- Q2: Even if I get the flu vaccine, I can still get a mild case of the flu.**
- Q3: The side effects of the flu vaccine are worse than the flu.**
- Q4: Not everyone can take the flu vaccine.**
- Q5: Only older people need the flu vaccine.**
- Q6: You must get the flu vaccine before December**

A1: True

Flu is a highly infectious disease of the respiratory system and it can lead to pneumonia. Each year about 200,000 people in the U.S. are hospitalized and about 36,000 people die because of the flu.¹

A2: True

Flu vaccine protects most people from the flu. People who receive flu vaccine can get the flu but will be far less sick than someone who has flu and hasn't received flu vaccine. Flu vaccine doesn't protect you from other viruses that sometimes feel like the flu.

A3: False

The worst side effect you're likely to get with injectable vaccine is a sore arm.

A4: True

You might not be able to get this protection if you're allergic to eggs, are very sick with a high fever, or have had a severe reaction to the flu vaccine in the past.



A5: False

Adults and children with conditions like asthma, diabetes, heart disease and kidney disease need to get the flu vaccine. People who are active and healthy can also benefit from the protection that the flu vaccine offers.

A6: False

Flu vaccine can be given before or during the flu season. While the best time to get flu vaccine is October or November, getting vaccinated in December or later can still protect you against the flu.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention



Bon voyage!

You know what back-to-school time means, don't you? It means now you can take your dream vacation without the crowd of college kids yelling outside of your hotel window at the stroke of midnight, or little ones boisterously playing a game of tag around your table in a restaurant. Now is your time to enjoy another well-earned vacation. But before you go, make sure you're prepared. You may need more than sunglasses and airline tickets. You may need immunizations.

Depending on where your travels take you, you may need to see your health care provider or travel to a medical clinic to be immunized for illnesses that are almost nonexistent in the U.S. Ideally, set up an appointment for your vaccinations four to six weeks before your trip. Most

vaccines take time to become effective in your body and some vaccines must be given in a series over a period of days or weeks.

If it's less than four weeks before you leave, you should still see your doctor. You might still benefit from shots or medications and other information about how to protect yourself from illness and injury while traveling.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention divides vaccines for travel into three categories: routine, recommended and required. The routine vaccinations are those recommended here in the U.S. At the right is a list of other regions and the recommended and required vaccinations you should receive before you go there.

Vaccines For Travel

Age	Recommended Vaccinations	Required Vaccinations
Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hepatitis A • Hepatitis B • Meningococcal • Rabies • Typhoid • Tetanus-diphtheria, measles booster (as needed) • Polio (one-time dose for adults) 	Yellow Fever
Asia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Japanese encephalitis • Hepatitis A • Hepatitis B • Meningococcal • Rabies • Typhoid • Tetanus-diphtheria, measles booster (as needed) 	None
Australia, South Pacific, Eastern Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hepatitis A • Hepatitis B • Meningococcal • Rabies • Typhoid • Tetanus-diphtheria, measles booster (as needed) 	None
Caribbean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hepatitis A • Hepatitis B • Meningococcal • Rabies • Typhoid • Tetanus-diphtheria, measles booster as needed • Yellow fever (Trinidad and Tobago only) 	None
Mexico and Central America	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hepatitis A • Hepatitis B • Meningococcal • Rabies • Typhoid • Tetanus-diphtheria, measles booster as needed • Yellow fever (Panama) 	None
Western Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hepatitis A • Hepatitis B • Tetanus-diphtheria, measles booster as needed 	None
Middle East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hepatitis A • Hepatitis B • Rabies • Typhoid • Tetanus-diphtheria, measles booster as needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meningococcal • Polio
South America	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hepatitis A • Hepatitis B • Rabies • Typhoid • Tetanus-diphtheria, measles booster as needed • Yellow fever (Argentina only) 	None



Food safety — grandparent style

Being a grandparent can be a joy of life. Whether you take care of your little ones full time or just lend a hand when they're around, make sure you follow safe food practices.

Keep it clean

Always begin formula and food preparation by washing your hands. Did you know that not washing hands could result in infant diarrhea or worse? Remember, bacteria can grow:

- On diapers
- In feces and urine
- In raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs
- On pets like dogs, cats, turtles, snakes and birds
- In soil and water

Handling baby food safely

Harmful bacteria from a baby's mouth can be introduced into food or bottles where it can grow and multiply even after refrigeration and reheating. If the baby doesn't

finish a bottle, don't put it back in the refrigerator for another time. The same is true for a jar of baby food. Saliva on the spoon contaminates the remaining food.

Here's a list of baby foods and their storage limits:

Liquids	Refrigerator	Freezer
Expressed breast milk	5 days	3 to 4 months
Formula	2 days	Not recommended
Whole milk	5 days	3 months
Reconstituted evaporated milk	3 to 5 days	Not recommended

Special handling

- For shelf storage of unopened cans of formula, observe "use by" dates printed on containers. Store evaporated milk up to 12 months.

- Heat liquid in disposable bottles in hot tap water, not in the microwave.
- If heating glass or hard plastic bottles in the microwave, remove the cap and nipple first.
- Shake bottle before testing the temperature on your hand.

Discard any unused milk left in a bottle.

Solids (opened or freshly made)	Refrigerator	Freezer
Strained fruits and vegetables	2 to 3 days	6 to 8 months
Strained meats and eggs	1 day	1 to 2 months
Meat and vegetable combinations	1 to 2 days	1 to 2 months
Homemade baby foods	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months

Special handling

- Observe “use by” date for shelf storage of unopened jars.
- Check to see that the safety button on the lid is down. If the jar lid does not “pop” when opened or is not sealed safely, do not use.
- Do not heat meats, meat sticks, eggs or jars of food in the microwave.
- Transfer food from jars to bowls or heating dishes. For 4 ounces of food, microwave on high 15 seconds; stir and let stand 30 seconds.
- Stir and test temperature of foods before feeding baby.
- Don’t feed a baby from the jar.

Other tips:

- Don’t use perishable items like milk, formula or foods that have been left out of the refrigerator or without a cold source for more than two hours.
- If you’re making homemade baby food, use a brush to clean areas around the blender blades or food processor parts. Old food particles can harbor harmful bacteria that may contaminate other foods.
- Use detergent and hot water to wash and rinse all utensils (including can openers) that come in contact with baby’s foods.
- Discard jars with chipped glass or rusty lids.
- To freeze homemade baby food, put the mixture in an ice cube tray. Cover with heavy-duty plastic wrap until the food is frozen. Then pop food cubes into a freezer bag or airtight container and date it. Store up to three months. One cube equals one serving.
- Small jars can also be used for freezing. Leave about ½ inch of space at the top because food expands when frozen.

On the go

When you’re out and about with the baby:

- Transport the bottles and food in an insulated cooler.
 - Place the ice chest in the passenger compartment of the car. It’s cooler than in the trunk.
 - Use frozen gel packs to keep food or bottles cold on long outings.
- Do not keep bottles or food in the same bag with dirty diapers.

No honey for honey

Even though you may be interested in health foods, do not use honey as a sweetener to entice babies to drink water from a bottle. Honey isn’t safe for children less than a year old. It can contain the botulinum organism that could cause illness or death.

Wash your hands

Keeping hands clean is one of the most important steps we can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. It's best to wash your hands with soap and clean running water for 20 seconds. However, if soap and clean water are not available, use an alcohol-based product to clean your hands. Alcohol-based hand rubs significantly reduce the number of germs on skin and are fast-acting.

When washing hands with soap and water:

- Wet your hands with clean running water and apply soap. Use warm water if it's available.
- Rub hands together to make lather and scrub all surfaces.
- Continue rubbing hands for 20 seconds. Need a timer? Imagine singing "Happy Birthday" twice to a friend!
- Rinse hands well under running water.
- Dry your hands using a paper towel or air dryer. If possible, use your paper towel to turn off the faucet.

Remember: If soap and water aren't available, use alcohol-based gel to clean hands.

When using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer:

- Apply product to the palm of one hand
- Rub hands together
- Rub the product over all surfaces of hands and fingers until hands are dry

When should you wash your hands?

- Before preparing or eating food
- After going to the bathroom
- After changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has gone to the bathroom
- Before and after tending to someone who is sick
- After blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- After handling an animal or animal waste
- After handling garbage
- Before and after treating a cut or wound

Secret Code Hand Washing Game

Actual Letter: A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

Secret Code Letter: Z Y X W V U T S R Q P O N M L K J I H G F E D C B A

Secret code letters are in parenthesis below. Match the code letters to the actual letters to spell a word relating to hygiene.

1. Type of germ that causes hepatitis A is a _____.
(E R I F H)
2. Wash your hands for at least _____ seconds.
(G D V M G B)
3. When washing your hands use _____ water.
(D Z I N)
4. Hand washing soap should be _____.
(Z M G R Y Z X G V I R Z O)
5. Most important part of hands to wash is under the _____.
(U R N T V I M Z R O H)
6. Germs can be spread at least _____ different ways.
(U L F I)
7. When washing your hands rub together _____.
(E R T L I L F H O B)
8. The best prevention against infectious disease is _____.
(S Z M W D Z H S R M T)
9. The type of germ that causes Shigella is a _____.
(Y Z X G V I R Z)
10. The most important time to wash your hands is after using the _____.
(G L R O V G)



Back to school the healthy way

Find the words in the list below for a fun and healthy school year.

E Y E G L A S S E S S L R S S
 H T U O M H E M O H E O O I T
 O I L O P A E U D L L O T C O
 H S A W T P E S L N S H A K H
 C O U G H P S A O F A C R T S
 H C N U L Y V K T N E S E E R
 Q Q G P S B B I O I M S G A D
 O P N W M I B A R O N H I C S
 B B O O R R N A C U B G R H D
 E A S R E T R E T K S W F E N
 G U C K G H V O H H P H E R A
 G P K O V D D S T C R A R F H
 S E D X N A G R M C T O C L I
 S D L O C Y F O O D O I O K K
 X O P N E K C I H C M D K M W

BACKPACK	EATING	HOME	SCHOOL
BACON	EGGS	KITCHEN	SHOTS
BATHROOM	EYEGLASSES	LUNCH	SICK
BOOKS	FLU	MEASLES	SONG
CHICKENPOX	FOOD	MOUTH	TEACHER
COLDS	GERMS	NOSE	VIRUS
COUGH	HANDS	POLIO	WASH
DOCTOR	HAPPYBIRTHDAY	REFRIGERATOR	WORK

Shingles vaccine covered under SHP PPO and BCN

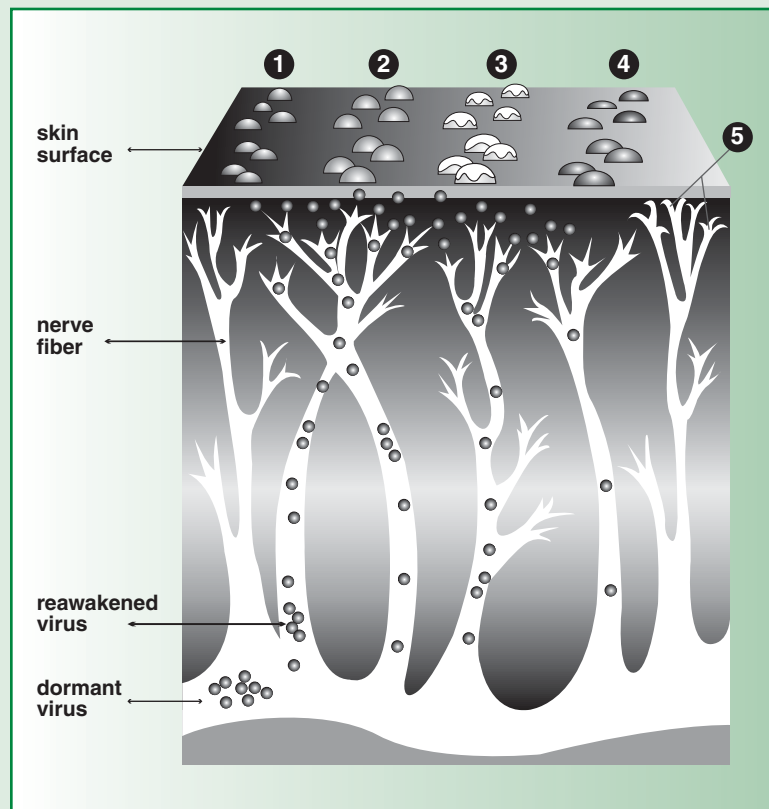
The Food and Drug Administration has licensed Zostavax, a new vaccine to reduce the risk of shingles (herpes zoster) in people age 60 and older. This vaccination is covered under your SHP PPO and BCN plans. The vaccine is given as a single injection under the skin, preferably in the upper arm. In studies, the vaccine also slightly reduced the duration of pain following the onset of shingles in people who developed the disease despite being vaccinated with Zostavax.

What is shingles?

Shingles is a painful and dreaded illness. Anyone who's had it knows about the stinging and burning pain from the blistering rash. Shingles is caused by the reactivation of the chickenpox virus (herpes zoster) in the body years after the initial illness. The virus usually affects one or two of the large nerves that spread outward from the spine, causing pain and a rash in a band around one side of the chest, abdomen or face. The rash will blister and scab off after seven to 10 days. There may be changes in the color of the skin when the scabs fall off. In bad cases of shingles, these color changes last forever. In most people, the pain lasts from one to three months.

Shingles can have a lasting effect.

Shingles can also affect the eyes, causing swollen eyelids, redness and pain. Shingles of the eye can cause scars that affect the vision. It can also lead to glaucoma later in life. Glaucoma is an eye disease that can cause blindness.



No one knows what makes the virus active again. Shingles can affect anyone who has had chickenpox. Exposure to the rash can cause chickenpox in a person who hasn't previously had chickenpox. Older adults and people with weakened immune systems are more likely to get the illness. People with weakened immune systems include those who have had a bone marrow or organ transplant; cancer, especially of the lymph system; or are infected with HIV.

There is help.

Prevention is always best, so if you are age 60 or older, get your vaccination. However, if you do suspect shingles, call your doctor or contact BCBSM's or BCN's BlueHealthConnection® to discuss medication that can limit the pain and rash. If possible, call as soon as you notice the rash. Medication works best when it's started immediately.

Can your kitchen pass the food safety test?



What comes to mind when you think of a clean kitchen? Shiny waxed floors? Gleaming stainless-steel sinks? Spotless counters and neatly arranged cupboards? Well, all might look “picture-perfect,” but may not be really clean or safe. At home, food safety means food storage, food handling and using proper cooking techniques.

To see how well you’re doing, take this quiz. Give yourself two points for every correct answer; then read on to learn how you can keep your meals safe.

Quiz

Choose the answer that best describes the practice in your household.

1. The temperature of my home refrigerator is:

- a. 50 degrees Fahrenheit (10 degrees Celsius).
- b. 40 F (5 C).
- c. I don’t know; I’ve never measured it.

2. The last time we had leftover cooked meat, chicken or fish, the food was:

- a. Left to cool at room temperature, then put in the refrigerator
- b. Put in the refrigerator immediately after it was served
- c. Left at room temperature overnight or longer

3. The last time my home kitchen sink drain, disposal and connecting pipes were sanitized was:

- a. Last night
- b. Several weeks ago
- c. Can’t remember

4. If I use a cutting board to cut raw meat, poultry or fish; before I use it again, I would:

- a. Reuse the board as is.
- b. Wipe the board with a damp cloth.
- c. Wash the board with soap and hot water.
- d. Wash the board with soap and hot water and then sanitize it.

5. I like my hamburgers cooked:

- a. Rare (140 F)
- b. Medium (160 F)
- c. Well done (170 F)

6. The last time I made cookie dough:

- a. I made it with raw eggs and sampled some of it.
- b. I made it with raw eggs, refrigerated it, and then sampled some of it.
- c. I bought it from the store and then sampled some of it.
- d. I didn’t sample any of it until the cookies were baked.

7. To clean my kitchen counters and other surfaces that come into contact with food, I use:

- a. Water
- b. Hot water and soap
- c. Hot water and soap, then bleach solution
- d. Hot water and soap, then commercial sanitizing agent

8. When my dishes are washed, they’re:

- a. Washed and dried in an automatic dishwasher
- b. Left to soak in the sink for several hours and then washed with soap in the same water
- c. Washed right away with hot water and soap in the sink and then air-dried
- d. Washed right away with hot water and soap in the sink and immediately towel-dried

When in doubt, throw it out

You look in the fridge and see a slice of leftover pizza — perfect for a snack. But you can't remember how long it's been in there. Caution! Food poisoning may be right around the corner. Keep the list below handy. And remember: when in doubt, throw it out.

Product	Refrigerator (40° F)	Freezer (0° F)
Eggs (fresh, in shell)	3 to 5 weeks	Do not freeze
Mayonnaise (Refrigerate after opening)	2 months	Do not freeze
Frozen dinners and entrees (Keep frozen until ready to heat)	Don't store in refrigerator	3 to 4 months
Store-prepared or homemade egg, chicken, ham, tuna or macaroni salads	3 to 5 days	Doesn't freeze well
Hot dogs (opened package)	1 week	1 to 2 months
Hot dogs (unopened package)	2 weeks	1 to 2 months
Luncheon meat (opened package)	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 months
Luncheon meat (unopened package)	2 weeks	1 to 2 months
Bacon	7 days	1 month
Raw sausage (chicken, turkey, pork, beef)	1 to 2 days	1 to 2 months
Hamburger, ground meat	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months
Soups and stews (vegetable or meat added)	3 to 4 days	2 to 3 months
Cooked meat and meat casserole leftovers	3 to 4 days	2 to 3 months
Raw chicken or turkey pieces	1 to 2 days	9 months
Fried chicken	3 to 4 days	4 months
Cooked poultry casseroles	3 to 4 days	4 to 6 months
Cooked poultry pieces (plain)	3 to 4 days	4 months
Cooked poultry pieces (with broth, gravy)	1 to 2 days	6 months
Chicken nuggets, patties	1 to 2 days	1 to 3 months
Pizza (cooked)	3 to 4 days	1 to 2 months

Food safety test continued from page 12

9. The last time I handled raw meat, poultry or fish, I cleaned my hands afterwards by:

- a. Wiping them on a towel
- b. Rinsing them under hot, cold or warm tap water
- c. Washing with soap and warm water

10. I defrost meat, poultry and fish products by:

- a. Setting them on the counter
- b. Putting them in the refrigerator
- c. Microwaving them

11. When I buy fresh seafood:

- a. I buy only fish that's refrigerated or well-iced.
- b. I take it home immediately and put it in the refrigerator.
- c. I sometimes buy it straight from a local fisherman.

Quiz Answers

- 1. The answer is b.** Refrigerators should stay at 40 F (5 C) or less. Don't overlook the importance of maintaining an appropriate refrigerator temperature. A temperature of 40 F (5 C) or less is important because it slows the growth of most bacteria. The temperature won't kill the bacteria, but it will keep them from multiplying; and the fewer there are, the less likely you are to get sick. Freezing at zero F (minus 18 C) or less stops bacterial growth — although it won't kill bacteria already present. Measure the temperature with a thermometer and, if needed, adjust the refrigerator's temperature control dial.
- 2. The answer is b.** Hot foods should be refrigerated as soon as possible within two hours after cooking. Date leftovers so they can be used within a safe time period. Generally, they remain safe when refrigerated for three to five days. If in doubt, throw it out.
- 3. The answer is a.** The kitchen sink drain, disposal and connecting pipe should be sanitized periodically by pouring down the sink a solution of 1 teaspoon of chlorine bleach in 1 quart of water or a commercial kitchen cleaning agent. Food gets trapped in the drain and disposal and, along with the moisture, can create an ideal environment for bacterial growth.
- 4. The answer is d.** Never let raw meat, poultry or fish come into contact with other foods. Improper washing, such as with only a damp cloth, will not remove bacteria. Washing with only soap and water may not do the job either.

To prevent cross-contamination from a cutting board:

- Use smooth cutting boards made of hard maple or a nonporous material such as plastic that is free of cracks and crevices. These kinds of boards can be cleaned easily. Avoid boards made of soft, porous materials.
 - Wash cutting boards with hot water, soap and a scrub brush to remove food particles. Then sanitize the boards by putting them through the automatic dishwasher or rinsing them in a solution of 1 teaspoon of chlorine bleach to 1 quart of water.
 - Always wash and sanitize cutting boards after using them for raw foods and before using them for ready-to-eat foods. You may want to consider using one cutting board only for foods that'll be cooked and another only for ready-to-eat foods — or use one of the new disposable cutting boards.
- 5. The answer is both b and c.** Ground beef must be cooked to an internal temperature of 160 F. Using a digital or dial food thermometer is crucial, because research results indicate that some ground meat may brown before it reaches a safe internal temperature. Some ground meat patties cooked to 160 F or above can remain pink inside; so the color of meat alone isn't considered a reliable indicator of safety. If you're eating out, order your ground beef to be cooked well done.
 - 6. The answer is d.** Cooking the egg or egg-containing food product to an internal temperature of at least 160 F kills the salmonella bacteria. Refrigerating it won't.

Use pasteurized eggs in other foods containing raw eggs, such as homemade ice cream, cake batter, mayonnaise and eggnog. These eggs have been heated sufficiently to kill bacteria.

Here are some other safe egg tips:

- Buy only refrigerated eggs, and keep them refrigerated until you're ready to cook and serve them.
- Cook eggs thoroughly until both the yolk and white are firm, not runny; and scramble until there is no visible liquid egg.
- Thoroughly cook pasta dishes that contain eggs.

7. The answer is c or d. Bleach and commercial kitchen-cleaning agents are the best sanitizers. They're the most effective at getting rid of bacteria. Hot water and soap do a good job too, but may not kill all strains of bacteria. Water alone may get rid of visible dirt, but not bacteria.

Also, be sure to keep dishcloths clean, because when wet they can harbor bacteria and may promote their growth.

8. The answer is a and c. When you let dishes sit in water for a long time, the food left on them contributes nutrients for bacteria; so the bacteria will multiply. When washing dishes by hand, it's best to wash them all within two hours. Also, it's best to air-dry them so you don't handle them while they're wet.

9. The answer is c. Wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food — especially raw meat, poultry or fish. If you have an infection or cut on your hands, wear rubber or plastic gloves. Wash gloved hands just as often as bare hands because the gloves can pick up bacteria.

10. The answer is b or c. You should thaw foods in the refrigerator or microwave oven, or by putting the package in a watertight plastic bag submerged in cold water and changing the water every 30 minutes. Bacteria can multiply rapidly at room temperature, so don't thaw meat, poultry or fish products on the counter. Gradual defrosting overnight in the refrigerator is best because it helps maintain quality.

Foods defrosted in the microwave oven should be cooked immediately after thawing.

11. Both a and b are correct. Buy seafood from a reputable store. Once you buy it, immediately put it on ice, in the refrigerator, or in the freezer. Also:

- Don't buy cooked seafood such as shrimp, crab or smoked fish if it's displayed in the same case as raw fish, because cross-contamination can occur. Or at least make sure the raw fish is on a level lower than the cooked fish so that the raw fish juices don't flow onto the cooked items and contaminate them.
- Don't buy frozen seafood if the packages are open, torn or crushed on the edges. Avoid packages that are above the frost line in the store's freezer. If the package cover is transparent, look for signs of frost or ice crystals. This could mean that the fish has either been stored for a long time or thawed and refrozen.
- If you're going to eat the seafood within two days after you buy it, store it in the coldest part of the refrigerator, usually under the freezer compartment or in a special "meat keeper." Otherwise, wrap the food tightly in moisture-proof freezer paper or foil to protect it from air leaks and store it in the freezer.
- Toss a shellfish if it dies during storage or if its shell cracks or breaks. Live shellfish close up when you tap the shell.

Rating:

22 points:

Feel good that you practice the rules of keeping a safe kitchen.

11 to 21 points:

Keep the rules for food safety in mind so you can avoid the danger of getting sick from eating contaminated food.

10 points or below:

For a better understanding of food safety, visit:
<http://www.fsis.usda.gov>.

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